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The U.S. Army Division: The Continuous Evolution to Remain Relevant

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Abstract

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The U.S. Army Division:
The Continuous Evolution to Remain Relevant

> The end of the Cold War has prompted another examination of divisions and brigades as the Army adapts to new threats and new national missions. Whatever directions the changes may take, divisions and brigades will be organized for a particular mission, against a particular enemy, at a particular time, and in a particular place. The search for better combined arms units will continue unabated as new lessons and new experiences are weighed, and the search to integrate new technology into existing organizational concepts will likewise present an ongoing challenge in the immediate future.
>
> —John B. Wilson, 1998[1]

Divisions are critical organizations for the United States because they have been the nucleus around which brigades form to generate and project landpower in support of the desires and goals of our national command authority. While every component in the joint force is important, history is replete with examples of landpower as the decisive force in war and in peacetime engagements. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army* describes the importance of landpower in the joint force as "The Army gives the combatant commander depth and versatility because landpower expands the friendly range of military options."[2] ADP 1 reinforces the importance of landpower in the joint force in that "By multiplying the range of U.S. capabilities that the adversary must counter, the Army narrows options that might otherwise work against a lesser opponent or a coalition partner supported only by U.S. air and maritime power."[3] The Army projects this capability in the form of brigade combat teams (armored brigade, infantry brigade, and stryker brigade) organized around a division headquarters. The division structure has been resident in the United States Army since the Revolutionary War, but throughout the history of the United States Army, there has been constant debate about the size of the division, the purpose of the division, and the employment of the division.

This argument continues today as the brigade combat team (BCT) reorganization into modular combined arms formations has replaced the division as the primary combined arms formation in the Army. Recent deployments of brigades organized as advise and assist brigades (AAB) in Iraq and Afghanistan have continued to provide fuel to the question of if we still need the division-level of structure or if we merely need BCTs and corps structures.[4] Regardless of this argument, the division continues to evolve and will likely be utilized as a joint task force (JTF) headquarters as we continue to look for ways to project landpower in peace and in war.

In a Rand Study in 2000, Richard Kedzior drives home this point as he writes that "The name 'division' is important to the Army, but a term not possible to define precisely. Considering the amount of change that the division has undergone, its endurance implies a semantic tradition. The Army's history is inextricably tied to it; therefore it would be difficult to discard."[5] The division will continue to be a polarizing catalyst for discussion within the Army, but history and the future trajectory of the division's purpose points to the division remaining a viable and important structure within the Army in the foreseeable future. An effective division structure must also provide combined arms synergy, integrate effects, maintain a feasible professional development structure; and most importantly as John Wilson indicated at the start of this paper, focused on mission and adversary.

To fully understand the division argument and how the division has evolved to this point in history, it is best to look to history to frame the environment that has propelled the division to its current structure and purpose. Although the modern Army division emerged from World War I, we must look further back in history to understand

how important this echelon has been to Army organizational structure and comprehend the original purpose for the division and how it has continued to evolve.

Early History of the U.S. Army Division

Throughout history, leaders have sought an asymmetrical advantage over their adversaries. This advantage was normally in the form of technology, tactics, strategy, or structure. In his book, *Breaking the Phalanx*, retired Army Colonel Douglas MacGregor relates the story of the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C. between the Macedonians and the Romans. During the battle, the Macedonians deployed their legendary phalanx against the Roman legions. The phalanx was a powerful formation when engaging enemy hoplite phalanxes or unorganized infantry. However, the Romans organized into legions which could be further detached into maniples. MacGregor points out that the Macedonian phalanx "tactics failed in action against the Roman legions, which could maneuver more easily without fear of losing alignment and without the need for concern about gaps in the line."[6] Rome organized the legion as a flexible force that could maneuver quickly and effectively counter the lumbering Macedonian phalanx. The legion was also flexible enough to face a myriad of differently organized enemies and conduct occupation duties throughout the world.[7] The origin of the division is similar to the story of the legion. In fact in the late 1990s as the Army struggled with the question of what role divisions should fulfill, the TRADOC Commander, General William Hartzog, noted that "Probably the first real division-like organization on the battlefield was the Roman legion - a 6,000 man organization of combined arms, articulated cohorts and centuries capable of independent operations."[8]

Western European nations began organizing divisions for the purposes of administration and maneuver in the late 18th century. During the Seven Years War

(1756-1763), Marshal de Broglie of France experimented with grouping regiments into demi-brigades and then organizing these brigades with artillery into formations that we would recognize later as divisions.[9] The American experience of operating in a division structure started during the Revolutionary War. Interestingly enough it was a former militia officer, George Washington, who fought for the British in the Seven Years War on the American Continent (commonly referred to as the French and Indian War) who determined that the fledging Continental Army would employ the division to assist in the administration and control of this newly formed large Continental Army.

During the Revolutionary War, General George Washington, the Commander of the Continental Army determined that the brigade and divisional structure was the best method to command and control his forces. This was a break from tradition as up to this point in western history, most armies employed forces as regiments as demonstrated in the Seven Years War. In 1775, General Washington "ordered the army at Boston to be organized into three divisions. Each division comprised of two brigades of approximately equal strength. Major Generals commanded the divisions and most brigades were commanded by brigadiers."[10] Although General Washington organized the Army into brigades and divisions, these were not the mobile and independent organizations that they would eventually become later in the war. The primary purpose for organizing into divisions was for administrative purposes rather than tactical employment.[11] In 1778, Washington expressed his vision for the division and brigade structures in terms of the tactical employment of these forces. He stated that "the division-brigade-regiment organization was for the sake of order, harmony, and discipline. Each brigade and division would have a general officer as its commander

and would be capable of moving either jointly or separately like a 'great machine' as the circumstances required."[12] Washington authorized staffs and logistical capabilities for the brigade since he emphasized building brigades capable of operating independently.[13] However, he placed less emphasis on divisions, as the Army still formed them in an ad hoc manner as the operational or tactical situation demanded.[14] Although Washington eventually achieved his vision of organizing his forces under these higher echelons, the divisions and brigades never truly became the combined arms organizations that he envisioned. Instead of becoming fully combined arms formations, the Army organized brigades and divisions around infantry and artillery regiments with cavalry remaining separate from these organizations.[15]

After the war ended and the Congress reduced Army end strength, the Army came close to developing a truly combined arms organization referred to as a legion. The legion was the size of two brigades in terms of manpower (5,120 men) organizing infantry, artillery, and cavalry into one formation which was further subdivided into four sub-legions.[16] However the nation never fully manned the legion and as resources continued to dwindle for defense funding, the Army eventually organized back into permanent regiments, which were scattered across the country. The movement back to regimental formations is a pattern that the United States Army would follow throughout the 19th century. Although the Army formed divisions and brigades during wars, it would revert back to regiments scattered across the country after every war. This became the pattern in spite of the fact that the Army organized into divisions during the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. The effectiveness of these organizations were

demonstrated repeatedly but the integration of militia and maintaining regular army troop levels led to this turbulence in organizational design until the 20th century.

As the War of 1812 started the Army still maintained permanent structure at the regimental level. The expansion of the Regular Army for the war and the mobilization of the militias created the need for brigades and divisions to effectively employ this expanded force. The disparity in the size of divisions and brigades would create the drive to regulate the size and composition of these forces after the end of the war. As the Army expanded and regulars, volunteers, and militia forces organized into ad hoc brigades and divisions, the size of these formations varied widely. Brigades manning ranged from 1400 to 400 men and divisions varied from 6,500 men to 2,500 men.[17] Militia were never truly organized into brigades and divisions with regulars but "regular, militia, and volunteer brigades served at times in commands that equaled the size of a division, such organizations were frequently called armies."[18] The lack of manpower and the disjointed mobilization and expiration of service by volunteers and militia meant that these ad hoc brigades and divisions would never evolve to resemble the combined arms concept envisioned during the revolutionary war.[19] In 1821, Major General Winfield Scott, who witnessed the organizational struggles first hand as a Regular Army Brigade Commander during the war, published his *General Regulations for the United States Army*. Congress approved these regulations and introduced the corps as an echelon of command above the division. "Two regiments constituted a brigade, two brigades a division, and two divisions an army corps. Infantry and Cavalry were to be brigaded separately."[20] Scott modeled the Army after Napoleon's French army, and the fact that Infantry and Cavalry were in brigades separately meant that division would be

the lowest level for combined arms integration. In spite of these new regulations, the Army continued to be, in fact, organized permanently into regiments and was once again strewn across the frontier and borders until the War with Mexico in 1846.

Although during the Mexican War the Army would repeat the practice of incorporating forces into ad hoc divisions, the Army would take a step forward in the integration of combat arms in the divisions and the assimilation of volunteer and militia forces into division structure. Two large forces, under the Command of Brevet Brigadier General Zachary Taylor and Major General Winfield Scott fought the war; however, neither commander organized forces into a corps during the conflict. Taylor organized his forces into two Regular Army Divisions of two brigades each and a volunteer division of two brigades. Once he captured Monterrey, the bulk of his forces were transferred to Winfield Scott for the campaign against Mexico City. Taylor then organized his remaining men into an effective 5,000 man combined arms division that utilized mobility, firepower, and infantry to defeat the Mexican Army at Buena Vista.[21] Winfield Scott initially only organized his volunteers into a division, leaving the regulars in separate brigades, however after the victory at Vera Cruz, he organized his army into "four divisions of two brigades each, with an artillery company supporting each brigade."[22] The Mexican War demonstrated an evolution in division structure through more effective standardization and integration of militia and volunteer forces. The war also "brought about a new integration of infantry and field artillery within divisions, which operated as independent, maneuverable commands."[23] This was essentially the concept that George Washington had envisioned for the Continental Army 70 years earlier. Although these lessons would result in revisions to regulations that recognized the superiorly of

combined arms employment at the division level, divisions and brigades remained only wartime formations. Many of the same leaders who fought in the Mexican War would lead the Union and Confederate forces in the Civil War and would bring the lesson of combined arms operations to the conflict.

The Union forces initially utilized the division as their highest level of structure, while growing what would become the Army of the Potomac. However, President Abraham Lincoln was concerned with the ability to command and control such large forces in combat and ordered Major General George McClellan to organize the divisions into corps.[24] Initially the Union organized divisions as combined arms formations with infantry brigades, a cavalry squadron, and an artillery battalion. This structure meant that the corps and army commanders directed the operational employment of the divisions, but had no tools at their disposal to influence the battle. By 1863, the Union moved artillery battalions to the corps and formed cavalry into a separate cavalry corps, except for a squadron of cavalry that each corps maintained for scouting and picketing missions.[25] This transition from integration of combined arms at the division-level to combined arms at the corps-level meant that corps and army commanders had tools to influence the battle at decisive points, but it also meant that the corps could not leverage combined arms against enemy forces until a corps had fully arrived at the battlefield. The Confederate forces organized around essentially the same structure as the Union Army.[26]

Although battles were combined arms affairs in the Civil War, the responsiveness and mobility of incorporating all arms at the division-level took a step backwards as lumbering corps became the integrators of combined arms. As with all previous wars,

the Army reduced force structure and scattered troop and company-sized elements across the country with the regiment as the largest tactical command and control element in the Regular Army. Leaning on the lessons from the Civil War, the Army again formed corps to fight the Spanish American War and combined arms remained at the corps-level with divisions and brigades consisting of primarily a single arm.[27] However this would change in the early 20th Century as technology continued to transform war at the operational and tactical level. The division and eventually the brigade would become the level at which combined arms were integrated and employed.

The Division in the 20th Century

At the dawn of the 20th Century, the American Army was in a familiar position, posted across the United States and pacifying insurgents in the Philippines. Although the Army appeared to be no closer to establishing standing brigades and divisions; events in the second decade of the new century provided impetus to permanently authorize both of these formations. The Army remained organized into regiments, and at times organized into ad hoc brigades. However the General Staff, which was organized in 1903 in response to the mobilization debacle during the War with Spain, determined that the division, not the corps should be the primary combined arms maneuver formation because of the inordinate amount of time it required to move a corps over the poor American roads.[28] In 1911, the revolution in Mexico provided an opportunity to test mobilization and deployment principles. The Maneuver Division, which climbed to 12,809 men at the end of the sixteen day deployment, proved to be incredibly inefficient. In comparison the Bulgarians mobilized 270,000 men in eighteen days.[29] This experience, the punitive expedition with Mexico in 1916, and the war in

Europe led to the National Defense Act of June 1916 which led to permanently organized Regular Army and National Guard units in the modern division structure.[30]

On the eve of entering World War I the Army still utilized the triangular division designed for the defense of the Continental United States. However upon entering the war, the Army leadership decided to adopt the square division design to adapt to the static attrition based warfare that characterized the Western Front. "The square infantry division had 28,000 soldiers, was organized into two brigades of two infantry regiments each, and was designed to provide sufficient strength and slugging power to make the frontal attacks used in the trench warfare of that era."[31] The square division performed well during the war, but suffered from mobility issues due to size and over emphasis on firepower. Regardless, the majority of the leadership that fought in France believed that the square division was superior and the Army should permanently retain the square division structure. However, General John J.Pershing thought that the Army needed to adopt a smaller triangular division structure, better suited to combat in North America.[32]

As previous demonstrated, throughout the history of the American Army, divisional reform and discussions after wars generally focused on increasing combined arms capabilities or seeking permanent authorization for division structure. The National Defense Act of June 1916, which solidified the approval of the division structure and the success of the combined arms division, propelled the post-war argument in a different direction. From this point forward in the 20th Century the division structure argument would focus on developing the best structure to address the most likely threat. As John Wilson noted in the quote at the start of this paper, "divisions and brigades will be organized for a particular mission, against a particular enemy, at a

particular time, and in a particular place."[33] This focus and continuous improvements in technology powered a carousel of ideas that would generate a plethora of theories of division reorganization throughout the 20th Century.

Fifteen years after he retired from the Army, General Pershing would finally see the Army form his triangular division. In 1939, General George Marshall ordered the reorganization of the infantry divisions into three regiment triangular formations to increase mobility, flexibility, and integration of new weapons into these formations.[34] Although these divisions remained combined arms formations, they removed the brigade as an echelon of command. By removing this de facto echelon the division became the lowest level to integrate combined arms. Although designed to be a separate combined arms organization, "planners believed that the division would always be part of a larger force in any engagement, thus permitting a more efficient distribution of resources across corps and armies."[35]

In contrast, the Army designed the armored division in 1940 with a combined arms brigade that included tanks and artillery to operate independently in pursuit and exploitation roles.[36] As the war progressed the Army added more infantry to the armored division and designated brigadier generals and senior colonels to command brigade-level combat commands. "The combat command represented a very important operational change, designed to be a flexible headquarters around which the division commander could task organize maneuver battalions and artillery. In that sense, the combat command was the parent of the modern brigade."[37]

The Army also organized corps to influence and support subordinate division operations with artillery, reconnaissance groups, armored groups, and other combat

support and combat service support elements. This basic structure remained essentially the same with small adjustment throughout World War II and Korea. The next major change would occur in 1954 as the Army grappled with doctrine to fight on the atomic battlefield. The PENTOMIC division would significantly change the design of division-structure and guide future force developers as an example of what right does not look like.

The PENTOMIC division was the first major reorganization of division structure after World War II. In the early 1950s, the Army searched for methods to employ nuclear weapons on the battlefield. General Maxwell Taylor envisioned a smaller division organized into several small combat task forces that could fight as a division or individually. In 1956, he ordered the Army to move forward with the PENTOMIC division concept. "Five battle groups formed the fighting core of the PENTOMIC division, replacing regimental combat teams as the primary maneuver commands. The battle group was sized to be large enough to fight independently, but small enough to be expendable."[38] Army leadership decided that colonels would command battle groups due to the larger size and requirement to operate independently. This command structure provided a professional development challenge as there was no command opportunity between captain and colonel, a huge gap in the development timeline of an officer to determine if he has developed and matured enough to command a large, independent organization. The PENTOMIC division was a combined arms organization, but as with the previous infantry division design, the division facilitated combined arms integration which meant assigning artillery batteries ad hoc to the battle groups. The demise of the PENTOMIC division was likely hastened by the deployment of a task

force from the 24th Infantry Division to a peacekeeping operation in Lebanon which "the PENTOMIC structure did not elicit confidence in its flexibility to conduct contingency operations."[39]

Fortunately the Army decided to replace the problematic PENTOMIC division with the Reorganization Army Division (ROAD) in 1962. ROAD reverted division structure back to the triangular division of World War II (much like the Armored divisions) with brigade headquarters that could employ a mix of combined arms battalions, batteries, and companies. Light infantry, mechanized infantry, and armor battalions could all plug into the ROAD structure. The Army also applied the ROAD structure to the airmobile divisions during the Vietnam War. This is one of the few periods in history where the Army did not significantly reorganize divisions during a sustained period of warfare. The Army decided to augment, and in the case of the Americal Division, create a division around separate brigades instead of reorganizing divisional structure.[40] In his division study, Richard Kedzior observed that "although failure in Vietnam should not be blamed on division organization and design, a structure that – capable of defending the South Vietnamese population and territory – might have been more effective in the end."[41]

The Army may have failed to adjust division structure to the threat in Vietnam, but the next major reorganization in the late 1970s framed structure around technology, doctrine, and enemy threat considerations. Division 86 took into account the lessons learned from the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the threat of Warsaw Pact forces in Europe, and AirLand Battle doctrine. Although on the surface Division 86 did not look significantly different from the ROAD Division, there were some significant changes that

made the division extremely lethal on the European battlefield.[42] A fourth company was added to each tank and mechanized infantry battalion; a fourth brigade was added to consolidate all divisional aviation and cavalry as a lethal air-ground force under this construct; and counter-battery capabilities were increased with more 8-inch howitzers, and multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS).[43] Division commanders could organize brigades into combat teams with artillery, engineers, and support elements but by doctrine the division was still the primary level which integrated combined arms. The corps was also a significant organization, shaping the battlefield for the divisions with an armored cavalry regiment, corps artillery brigades, a corps aviation brigade, and other significant combat support and combat service support units. The Army would add the light infantry division and reorganize the airborne and air assault divisions with the Army of Excellence initiative in the 1980s. This became the versatile Army that would win conflicts in Grenada and Panama that demanded light flexible units; and Desert Storm in which the heavy forces of the Army quickly overwhelmed the fourth largest army in the world.

The Army of Excellence was expensive to maintain, and with the end of the Cold War; the national leadership decreased force structure to ten divisions and four corps after Desert Storm. Later in the 1990s, the Division XXI experiment would add digital capabilities and eventually remove the fourth tank company from tank and mechanized infantry battalions supposedly because of increased lethality of the digital M1A2 Abrams and M2A3 Bradley in the late 1990s. The reduced Army of Excellence and the enhanced capabilities introduced through Division XXI would be the force that the United States would go to war with in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. However

unlike Vietnam, after early conventional victory turned into extended insurgencies, the Army would be forced to adapt the division and brigade structure to adjust to the new challenges on the battlefield.

New Division Structure for the Current Operating Environment

The road to transforming the Army to the forces that initially fought in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) started after the reduction of forces following Operation Desert Storm. After emerging from the European focused Cold War and stunning success in Desert Storm with a coalition force, the concept for future force structure was that it must be the core of a joint or multinational force:

> Given the political and military situation in the post–Cold War world, moreover, the Army could probably never again expect to conduct major operations on its own. Versatile enough to deploy for almost any mission, from humanitarian assistance to a major conventional war, its forces would have to be able to work effectively with the other American military services. Army command elements might also have to serve as combined headquarters with the militaries of other nations or coordinate with nongovernmental agencies.[44]

Division XXI was the first initiative to modernize communications structure and increase speed of action through superior situational awareness. This initiative was followed by the Army After Next, which focused on personnel policies to develop more cohesiveness by leaving soldiers in commands longer and designing a force that could deploy rapidly with moderate staying power.[45] These were termed echelons of maneuver, which were the tactical execution forces and echelons of concentration, which were the headquarters elements that would receive forces tailored to their assigned mission.[46] This concept significantly influenced Army force structure development throughout the first decade of the 21st Century.

General Eric Shinseki (Army Chief of Staff 1999-2003) closely followed the Army After Next concept with his transformation initiative. This concept moved modularity forward with the concept of a medium brigade called the interim brigade which would eventually become Stryker brigades. The interim brigade, and the traditional heavy and light brigades would be termed the interim and legacy forces respectively and they would eventually lead to an objective force in which the Army would organize all brigades with the same equipment along the same tables of organization to employ the brigades modularly.[47] To effectively employ the objective force the Army conceived the "Unit of Purpose Framework" which consisted of Units of Action (much like the earlier mentioned echelons of maneuver) and the Units of Employment (much like the earlier mentioned echelons of concentration).[48] While the Units of Action (UA) would replace brigades, and were fixed organizations of brigade-size that could be tailored depending on their mission; the Units of Employment (UE) were echelon above brigade units that consisted of a core staff that could receive other UE and UA units to accomplish their assigned mission.[49]

In 2003, after taking over as the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter Schoomaker adjusted the concept to support two wars that clearly were going to take extensive time to resolve. As Dr. John Bonin and Lieutenant Colonel Telford Crisco noted in their paper on the modular army, soon after General Schoomaker's announcement; "The Army seeks to solve the organizational design dilemma by retaining the advantages of relatively fixed structures as the basis for tailoring the force while furthering a commander's ability to creatively reorganize it to meet specific tasks."[50] Transitioning the modular brigade concept accomplished two objectives for the

Army as it dug in for the long fights in Afghanistan and Iraq. Through transitioning to smaller, more capable brigades, the Army increased the strategic depth of the force by building more brigades for the rotations into both conflicts. The brigades also made it easier for the relief in place mission as like brigades could generally occupy equivalent areas of operations. Though this was not always feasible as force requirements increased and decreased in conflicts, but it was more efficient than previous force exchanges. The modular brigades also resurrected the vision of separate brigades from the 1980s, which provided the capability to field a force smaller than a division to accomplish contingency missions and provide a force to the combatant commander capable of operating independently under a JTF.[51]

As Dr. Bonin and LTC Crisco also noted in their article, this changed the focus of the Army from the division-level to the brigade-level. “Historically, the Army has not been based on the division; in fact, for the past 100 years, the Army has successfully employed self-contained combined arms brigades during numerous operations.”[52] This transformation was not a call for the removal of the division echelon, but for a structure that could meet future requirements with increased agility and flexibility. With little organic war fighting structure remaining at the division-level and with combined arms forces and robust staffs at the brigade-level; the division is on the tipping point of transitioning from a tactical focus to an operational level organization. The current division structure still maintains the traditional professional development roles for commanders from captain to major general, integrates effects, and synchronizes combined arms operations through the BCTs. The current division structure is also appropriate given the current threat picture. Although division structure appears to be

evolving into a more capable organization after shedding its cold war purely tactical focus, there are many thinkers who believe that the division echelon has run its course in history and that the Army should remove this level of structure that is the cog between brigades and corps.

The argument to eliminate the division from the Army command structure is generally based on the fact that technology allows a real time common operating picture across all echelons and that the division now merely creates a stovepipe between the brigades and the corps. Douglas MacGregor has written two books that recommend elimination of the division. The first, *Breaking the Phalanx*, which was written in 1997 argues that the evolution of the "All Arms Formation" from the field army in the 18th century, to the corps in the 19th century, to the large square division in the early 20th century and later the smaller triangular division, to finally the combat command (brigade) in the last years of World War II.[53] He argues that the shift to integrating combined arms lower echelons, the improvement in information systems, and the trend toward organizing a JTF HQ under a standing corps headquarters points towards rendering the division headquarters obsolete. In his next book, *Transformation Under Fire: Revolutionizing How America Fights*, he repeats his mantra of eliminating the division stating that "Army divisions are inherently top-heavy in administration and logistics, and the division's vertical command structure encourages tight, centralized control over operations that must be decentralized and joint at much lower levels…as a result divisions are not configured for non-nodal, noncontiguous operations."[54] In this second book he also takes on the joint structure proposing a standing JTF Headquarters that answers directly to the geographic combatant commanders reducing

additional levels of friction. Instead of divisions the JTF would have "service mission-focused capability packages that plug in for employment under Joint C2."[55] In both works he makes excellent points about flattening structure but never addresses the complications with removing a level of command in regards to professional development and an exceeding large span of control.

John Brinkerhoff, while not as extreme in views as MacGregor, also advocated moving to a brigade-based Army in 1997. He also advocated eliminating the division and grouping brigades under corps headquarters. However Brinkerhoff envisioned this grouping as a better method to integrate echelon above division units and also advocated expanding to nine corps level headquarters.[56] Unlike MacGregor, Brinkerhoff admits that the removal of the division has one "major defect" which is the elimination of command positions for 18 major generals (the U.S. Army was organized around 18 divisions at the time he wrote the article), and recalls that this disruption in the officer development system was one of the primary reasons that the PENTOMIC Division failed.[57]

Although both MacGregor and Brinkerhoff both imagined the current brigade based Army long before it was transformed, neither author provides a valid solution to develop Major Generals or for that matter Brigadier Generals who provide not only Command and Control at the division level, but mentorship and oversight of training and resources in garrison to ensure that units are prepared to execute their wartime mission. However, in 1995, Dr. Bonin proposed a brigade structure that allowed for an innovative rank structure that avoids the pitfalls of the PENTOMIC division. He proposed that a brigadier general command the brigade and colonels would each command the

brigade's maneuver regiment and support group.[58] Divisions remained relevant in Dr. Bonin's concept, "now unencumbered by a fixed structure, (the division) would replace the corps as the echelon that can rapidly concentrate combat power."[59] This vision was very close to both the final modular brigade structure and the direction the Army is moving as the mission of the division continues to evolve.

As MacGregor, Brinkerhoff, and Bonin were envisioning the future of the brigade and division, retired Major General Ben Harrison wrote an article in *Army Magazine* entitled "Changing Division Structure—Ask the Right Questions First." Although he did not directly recommend the elimination of the division, he proposed that the Army needed to evaluate the requirement for each echelon and warned that "the Army cannot afford to destroy its leader development programs or damage its personnel systems, but some bold experiments are demanded to learn first how to best fight and win in land warfare in the information age." [60] Harrison felt that a comprehensive review of Army structure and field testing was the only answer to avoiding the failures that previous structures, especially the PENTOMIC Division, suffered because the Army did not consider or test secondary impacts prior to deciding to execute structure change.[61] The leadership of the Army needs to heed General Harrison's sage as we look to the next evolution of division structure. Elimination of the division is not an evolution. Creating a gap in the Army structure would lead to secondary problems that a Corps could not solve, the solution to flatten structure is to restructure the division to enhance the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) capabilities since all future conflicts will most likely be joint, multinational efforts.

Contrary to MacGregor and Brinkerhoff's insistence that the division has outlived its usefulness, the Army has continued to evolve the division structure since modularizing BCTs. The decision to create a modular BCT, which replaced the division as the primary tactical maneuver force capable of independent operations, was fairly simple and straight forward. However the development of the UEs was a much more complex and murky. The Army conducted an extensive study of UEs and their roles during the modularity transformation. Initially General Schoomaker decided to design only two echelons of command above brigade. These were designated UEx which would replace the corps and division and UEy which would be equivalent of a theater army.[62] The role of the echelon above brigade would be critical at the Army sought to also transform how Army Forces (ARFOR) conduct operations as part of the joint force. "Both UEx and UEy would be capable of rapid transition to a JTF or JFLCC headquarters with full joint connectivity. Each headquarters would be capable of commanding and controlling Army, joint, and multinational forces."[63] These smaller joint capable headquarters would help synchronize operations and effects across the area of operations but would no longer be a hub of centralized planning and execution. The concept of mission command would enable the BCTs with large staffs to refine the assigned mission and execute it with the added clarity provided by the brigade commander's lens of experience. In 2005 the Army determined that the UEx needed to be more robust to meet the needs of a three star commander to employ the UEx as a JTF or JFLCC. The Army decided to return to the corps and division concept and the division design (Division 8.0) structured the division to deploy primarily as tactical headquarters with the JTF mission remaining at the corps level.[64] Finally in 2009, the

Army provided a more robust structure in the Division 9.1 design which, with joint manning document (JMD) augmentation, the division can function as JTF or CJTF.

Evolving toward a JTF Core Capability

As the Army began evolving division structure toward becoming JTF capable, in 2005, the Secretary of Defense "directed the Services and combatant commands to take several specific actions to make selected headquarters capable of leading JTFs. Each combatant command has been directed to designate Service two- and three-star headquarters for priority support as standing JTF HQ."[65] The Secretary of Defense recognized that the demand for JTFs would remain high and that the process of forming ad hoc JTFs is slow and cumbersome, the best method to overcome these obstacles is to build organizations that are trained and capable of quickly forming the core of a JTF headquarters.[66] "Since 1970, JTFs have been established and deployed to conduct operations in approximately 300 separate contingencies. These contingencies have occurred within every geographic combatant command for nearly every type of military mission, and span the scale from very small to very large."[67] Establishing divisions as JTF core units could provide up to half of the permanent staffing for a JTF, allowing for faster employment than a typical ad hoc JTF built from scratch, in which it can take up to six months to develop, approve, and fully man the JMD.[68] "The new-design division has the total troop numbers needed to meet the staff numbers required in all recent JTF HQ commanded by two-star officers."[69] The Army should assign each the mission of serving as a JTF HQ, either regionally as the Army aligns forces to each region or in cases such as the 82nd Airborne Division, which the Army could assign as the WMD JTF HQ.[70] It is difficult for JTF HQs to receive joint manning for training exercises and even more difficult to obtain interagency and intergovernmental support in any activity short of

deploying to war. This challenge in securing proper JIIM manning will provide significant challenges as the Army move forward in establishing division headquarters as the core for future JTF HQs.

This design is clearly a work in progress as a current G3 deployed to Afghanistan with JMD manning noted that, division structure still needs to be adjusted "The size and scope challenges even the best Chief of Staff's management abilities" with all functional staff sections headed by a Colonel.[71] The same G3 also felt that the division has integrated joint capabilities fairly easy, but we should look to other services to provide expertise in "EW, ISR, Joint Fires, Air Mobility, PRCC and SERE, Weather, Construction and, EOD" as the other services may be better suited to provide increased capability in these areas.[72] He felt that the biggest challenge is "operating in a coalition and interagency environment. Both involve cultural challenges, connectivity issues, and info sharing problems," the issues range from communications equipment, to classification of documents, to the tempo of operations and methods.[73] These comments are similar to the observations of the G3 of a division that deployed as a JTF HQ to a multinational exercise in Jordan.

A division G3 who recently deployed to Jordan organized as the JTF HQ for Operation Eager Light, with partial JMD augmentation, confirmed many of the same issues. Communications with multinational partners, integrating interagency and intergovernmental augmentation, and lack personnel to leverage JIIM capabilities without JMD augmentation is extremely challenging.[74] The JTF G3 also echoed the observations of the requirement for a rank heavy structure required to match joint and coalition partners, as well as the division's inherent lack of understanding of joint

functions, capabilities, and acronyms. Many of these challenges will be resolved as more divisions deploy to exercises and contingencies as JTF HQs, but the comparison between an operational and an exercise JTF HQ demonstrates similar challenges even though they are in different environments. The ability for the division to deploy and operate effectively as a JTF is critical to the Army vision of utilizing the division as Army's primary tactical warfighting headquarters or as a JTF operating at the tactical or operational role as required by the combatant commander. As the nation identifies conflicts that require force to resolve, our national leaders will seek opportunities to work with multinational partners to fight as a coalition. The ability to direct operations as a JTF or CJTF is a key task that the division must be able to achieve to meet this vision and support combatant commanders with required capabilities.

Strategic Relevance of the Modular Division

The key tenants of the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) are to pursue comprehensive engagement, promote a just and sustainable international order, and invest in the capability of strong and capable partners, and ensure strong alliances.[75] The 2011 National Military Strategy (NMS) states that the military objectives that support the NSS are Counter Violent Extremism, Deter and Defeat Aggression, Strengthen International and Regional Security, and Shape the Future Force.[76] All of these objectives point to the requirement to maintain small, flexible, and versatile forces to meet the needs of the nation. The NMS envisions a land force that will consist of "Joint Forces capable of full spectrum operations, and be organized to provide a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations operating on a sustainable rotation cycle."[77] The modular division deploying as a JTF with modular brigades as the force structure building block will enable the Army and the Joint Force to accomplish the

objectives of the nation as described in the NSS and NMS. To meet the objectives of the NSS and NMS the United States will have to partner with other nations to provide security force assistance to increase partner capacity and partner with other nations to deter and defeat aggression as well as counter violent extremism. These are sound strategies for the nation and for the military given the current world environment. "Decisive force has little significance at a time when the United States faces no great continental adversaries. World instabilities, not great power confrontations, are the greatest threats to peace and prosperity today."[78] The ability to project power quickly as independent brigades or brigades with enabling units under a JTF is the key to reacting swiftly to counter aggression and violent extremists and these small forces are well suited to increase partner capacity as demonstrated through the advice and assist concept in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A contemporary example of a medium sized force, quickly deployed and employed is the effectiveness of the French in Mali, increasing partner capacity while effectively fighting as a coalition to defeat well organized violent extremists. If faced with a similar deployment requirement, the US would normally deploy a three star level JTF with most likely a corps headquarters as the nucleus of the JTF. Division and brigade modular structures would allow the U.S. to deploy two brigades first to start building capacity followed by a division headquarters acting as a JTF with special operations and joint capabilities to assist in the operation. Once the Division is on the ground, the coalition forces with the brigades in the lead would conduct operations to defeat the extremists. Upon completion of the mission the brigades could remain to

continue building capacity or identical brigades from CONUS could relieve them and continue the mission while the brigades that fought return to the U.S. to reset.

In a 2011 RAND study, researchers validated that the brigade and division structure provide more flexibility and responsiveness for the combatant commander that requires forces on the ground. The study noted that "the current force structure exhibits greater flexibility and versatility than the force structure it replaced. The current force structure's superior responsiveness lies in its ability to promptly provide building blocks for force packages without the disruptions and consequences that characterized the efforts of the previous force structure."[79] This modular force structure with a JTF capable division headquarters and extremely capability independent modular brigades are the key to meeting our national objectives in the current environment. In his book *Yellow Smoke*, MG(R) Robert Scales reinforces the importance of a versatile and agile structure when discussion of the failures of Task Force Smith during the Korean War. Scales warns that "the best insurance against suffering more 'Task Force Smiths' is to deploy a fully trained form made up of all appropriate services capable of fighting effectively on arrival."[80]

Modular divisions deploying as JTFs with aligned BCTs consistently deploying to conduct security force assistance and partnership exercises, as well as conducting multinational operations to deter aggression and violent extremists will ensure that there is no repeat of Task Force Smith and that our national objective are achieved. The modular division provides combined arms synergy, integrates joint effects, and maintains a feasible professional development structure. If the current environment changes then we may need to, once again, evolve our divisional structure to meet those

new challenges. The division has been an important structure in the history of the United States Army, from the Revolutionary War through today. The continuous evolution to meet the requirements of the enemy and leverage technology will keep the division on the battlefield for the foreseeable future.

Endnotes

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